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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

March 20, 1973

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics
Stanford Medical Center
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Professor Lederberg:

As you can see by the enclosed, we have asked for a description of the USDA's grading and monitoring process for potatoes.

As regards compensation to farmers in the event of federal restrictions on sale or recall of blighted or diseased potatoes, you may be interested to know that both the Commerce and Judiciary Committees of the Senate are examining the entire issue of federal indemnity, to try and determine whether there should be a unified Federal policy in this area. This grew out of a controversy that developed over a proposed indemnity for damages alleged by the cyclamate ban, and passage of an indemnity provision in the Hazardous Substances Act for pesticide bans.

We are still pondering proposed language that would require testing of food additives for teratogenic and mutagenic damage effects, and provide for the Secretary to allow substances that cause such damage, only if he makes an affirmative finding that the public health hazard caused by withholding the chemical exceeds that which would be caused by permitting its use.

Thank you for keeping us informed of your thoughts on these issues.

I have brought your concerns on potato blight to the attention of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Senators from potato-producing states of Idaho and Maine.

Regards,


GAYLORD NELSON
U.S. Senator

GN/jrw

Attachments

P.S. -- Presume you saw the article, "The Great Potato Debate", in Medical World News, February 16, 1973, page 29.

Note to see you soon